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CONTRIBUTORS

Herbert C. Purnell, Jr., is a missionary candidate of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (China Inland Mission). He has taken graduate studies at the Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford, Conn., and has taught at the Toronto Institute of Linguistics and the language section of the Missionary Training Conference, Meadville, Pennsylvania.

Sol Tax, professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago, is also a former editor of the American Anthropologist. See Practical Anthropology, Vol. 3, No. 5, (Sept.-Oct. 1956), for the reprint of an article, "The Indigenous Foundations of Culture: An Anthropological Approach," by Sol Tax.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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THAI RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

Herbert C. Purnell, Jr.

Culture can be both advantageous and disadvantageous to the spread of the Gospel. Even within the cultural framework, some aspects are more favorable or unfavorable than others. But the difficulty is that culture is not composed of a series of independent facets. Rather it is composed of interrelated phases of learned behavior and activities, somewhat like the tangle of vines on the side of a building. Therefore, it is impossible to isolate one area of culture such as social behavior without also taking into account the influence of religion, system of values, economic life, and psychological attitudes of the people upon such social behavior.

Culture molds individuals and groups. This molding begins at birth and continues until death. Culture conditions attitudes, values, morals, and practices. To a large extent, this conditioning determines the reaction of a person to new innovations which are introduced into the culture, bringing with them inevitable change.

It is just this way in Thailand. Although there are certain areas of Thai culture which would be definite assets to the spread of the Gospel, there are other facets which exert a tremendous influence upon the minds and hearts of the Thai and which greatly retard the acceptance by the Thai of the Gospel message. When these traits and behavior patterns have been ingrained in the individual, the chances that he will go against his cultural molding decrease markedly.

However, this does not take into consideration two facts inherent in the Gospel which are of immeasurable importance. They are the supercultural nature of the Gospel message and the power of the Holy Spirit. The first makes the Gospel message relevant and applicable to any and every culture, regardless of diversities. The second makes the Gospel message relevant and applicable

to the individual heart and life within a culture, actually bringing into effect the conversion experience.

But we must face the difficulties in a culture, even with such forces on the side of missions, because the supercultural message of the Gospel must be presented in cultural terms to the people of Thailand. This is the problem of communication, and it is in this sphere that the cultural conditioning of the Thai people plagues Christian missions.

Let us briefly examine the traits which condition the response of the individual to the Gospel.

Thai Buddhism

The Thai are adherents to the Theravada sect of Buddhism. Not only is Buddhism the national religion, but the king is the prime defender of the faith. In a country slightly smaller than Texas, there are 18,000 "wats" or temple compounds still in use. There are ruins of thousands more.

Buddhism has an all-pervading influence upon the Thai peasant. At every turn in every day and event in his life, the peasant comes in contact with Buddhism. In fact, as Thompson pointed out, "Buddhism permeates the people's lives to such an extent that limits to its influence cannot be marked off."[1] It is this wholesale permeation of the people's lives from birth to death that presents the real problem to Christian missions because

> a man cannot be educated, become adolescent, be married, build a house, recover from an illness, plant or harvest a crop, prepare a meal, die or be cremated, without some religious rite. Every village has a "wat" of some sort which serves as church, town hall, hotel, recreation center, school, crematorium, and home for the aged and poor.[2]

Buddhism has some good points in its system, but its very nature imbues its followers with attitudes which are a liability to missionary activity. One of these attitudes is that of tolerance and nonaggression coupled with remarkable powers of absorption. Thompson says that Buddhism "instills in the people a cheerful humility and forbearance. It fosters self-control, and forbids cruelty and persecution of others."[3] These qualities create weighty problems for the missionary.

First, there is the tendency toward and danger of syncretism. Buddhists by open admission cannot condemn others, because judgment and condemnation lead to anger, which is not according to the Buddha's teaching of patience and tolerance. All religions, to the Buddhist, are but different disciplines leading to the same goal. Therefore, when missionaries teach the Bible and the Gospel message, they find that the Buddhist hearers are not reluctant to adopt the Bible's moral teaching and Christ's example, incorporating some of it into their beliefs. Caution must be taken by the missionary to emphasize that Christianity is different from Buddhism, different from the core out. This is not to minimize the excellent points of contact in speaking to the Thai, but rather not to allow an equation of the point of contact with the actual Christian doctrine itself.

Merit-Making

The other difficult point in this connection is the basic doctrine of merit-making inherent in Buddhism. It is hard to conceive of the extent to which this philosophy of life colors the thinking of the Thai. As we shall see later, the Thai culturally adapt the merit-making practices, designed for the next life, to be relevant to the here-and-now. Along with the Thai belief in the "all roads lead to one goal" view of other religions, the system of merit-making presents perhaps the hardest problem with which the missionary must cope in order to reach the heart of the individual. The main obstacle is the equation by the Thai of the missionary's activity in

Thailand as just a Christian way of making merit. Thus there is no reason for the Thai to become a Christian, since both religions merely make merit in their own ways. Thompson clearly states this in the following quotation:

> If the non-Christian could also be made to understand that the missionary is not working simply to make merit for himself, he might grasp the fundamental altruism of the Christian ideal; and the change from one religion to another, which is at present so drastic psychologically, would thus be greatly facilitated.[4]

Thai Personality

Kroeber[5] and Benedict[6] among some other anthropologists have pointed out the tendencies in many countries and societies for a national temperament to develop which is exhibited by its population. The Thai manifest a national temperament focused on psychic security. There are two facets of this which are most influential in the conditioning of the individual.

The first of these is the Thai enjoyment of life. This in turn is connected with the individual's self-reliance, which is ingrained in him from early childhood. A child in Thailand is very early forced to rely on his own achievement and ingenuity. He is helped very little in learning to walk and swim. His toilet training is entirely up to him. When he has accomplished anything he looks to no one for praise since he did it all by himself.

The Thai have no set schedule for meals. People eat when they are hungry. Even in this their self-reliance shows. There is also no status anxiety in Thailand. A person becomes socially important, not through showing off, having an expensive home, accumulating wealth, etc., but rather by being a good farmer, a good citizen, a good story-teller, a good kite-flier, or, best of all,

a monk. So, although a Thai peasant has little, he feels secure in his home and village.

This build-up of self-reliance presses itself into every area of life. But perhaps its influence has been strongest in the area of religion. The Thai enjoyment of life is contrary to Buddha's basic tenet: life is sorrow. The Thai believe life is basically good. This leads them to adapt culturally the Buddha's teachings, making them apply to the material here-and-now rather than to the spiritual hereafter. It then follows logically that merit-making is essentially interpreted to mean "that if a man exercises sufficient care in following the rules, he need not be anxious. It depends upon himself."[7] Benedict emphasizes this by saying:

> Merit-making, not as a measure for the conquest of desire and attainment of other-worldliness, but as an ethical precept of the good life, is basic to Thai Buddhism...Merit-making provides a series of pleasurable activities...by which a man is assured of his own moral solvency.[8]

This, you can readily see, presents one of the most difficult problems in the winning of the Thai to Christ.

The second facet of the Thai psychic security is the concept of the "cool heart." By this the Thai mean that those characteristics which are desirable are designated as "cool," whereas the undesirable ones are called "warm." By the term "cool" is meant several things. It refers to enjoying life to its fullest extent. But perhaps the term is used in its fullest sense to decide the coolness of attitude toward work, responsibility, or trouble. This also includes patience. Anger is revolting to the Thai, since it heats a person and causes him to become "warm." The best way to win an argument is to give in. The Thai also sanction the use of deceit or guile when there is a good end in view, since such a person has exhibited "coolness of heart." The laugh is

always on the person deceived, although such a person may be morally right.

The Thai and the Missionary

Such Thai patience is admirable, but it also serves to needle the missionaries, for no matter how much the missionary preaches, he always gets a hearing, a smile, much patience and tolerance--but no converts. The Thai are content with the old ways, and their patience lulls them into inactivity. This part of the Thai feeling of security presents a great obstacle to making clear the need of becoming a Christian. After 128 years of Protestant missions in Thailand, the number of Christians numbers less than one tenth of one per cent of the total population.

These, then, are some of the elements which the missionary must face in his contacts with the Thai. These are real problems to the advance of Christianity in Thailand. The missionary has great spiritual powers at his disposal, but he must also face the obstacles. The answers to such problems are not easy to derive. There must be much prayer and research yet. Although these elements condition the Thai upon their response to the Gospel, the missionary can derive new comfort and encouragement from the teaching of Scripture that it is the job of the Holy Spirit, not the missionary, to open hearts. His job is to be a voice proclaiming the message. He only sows; it is God Who produces the life of the plant.

Footnotes

1. Thompson, Virginia: Thailand, the New Siam. Macmillan, New York, 1941. p. 663.
2. Ibid., p. 630.
3. Ibid., p. 663.
4. Ibid., p. 668
5. Kroeber, A. L.: Anthropology. Harcourt, New York, 1948.

6. Benedict, Ruth: Patterns of Culture. Houghton, Boston, 1934.

7. Benedict, Ruth: Thai Culture and Behavior. Intercultural Studies, Inc., New York, 1943. p. 36.

8. Ibid., p. 36

9. Some 20,000 Christians out of a total population of over 20 million.

NOTES AND NEWS

Anthropology at The Hartford Seminary Foundation

Graduate degrees in anthropology are offered by The Hartford Seminary Foundation in Hartford, Connecticut. The M.A. degree is offered by the Kennedy School of Missions and the Ph.D. degree is under the jurisdiction of a special body called the Council for Advanced Studies. The course work is primarily in cultural anthropology, ethnology, and linguistics, with a wide range of courses being offered in each of those areas.

Two programs for the Ph.D. degree are offered: (1) the degree in course, which is open to qualified students in any of the schools of the Foundation; and (2) the field degree, which is open only to students enrolled in the Kennedy School of Missions. The latter will be expected to accomplish a substantial amount of their research on the field.

For the Ph.D. degree, the student must spend a minimum of two years in resident post-graduate study, provided the post-graduate work totals at least four years.

Further information may be obtained by writing to Dr. Paul Leser, Department of Anthropology, The Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford 5, Connecticut.

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

Eugene A. Nida

There is no doubt but what the limelight of publicity has been turned on the Dark Continent, which of course is no longer dark--except in the imaginations of those addicted to movie thrillers. This limelight of concern is, of course, promoted primarily by the fact that this huge continent, almost four times the size of the United States, is the greatest relatively untapped treasure of natural resources still available to the industrial world of Western Europe and North America. But this focussing of attention upon Africa is not only characteristic of the secular press, the short-story magazine, and the leaders in industry; it is also characteristic of the attitudes of many foreign missions, who see in Africa not only a great challenge for the future, but one of the strategic areas for consecrated effort, especially in view of the pressures of materialism, Communism, nationalism, and Islam.

Rapidity of Cultural Changes

It is almost a truism to state that Africa is rapidly changing, but the truth is that the rate of change is almost breathless. It would seem as though two thousand years of human development were being squeezed into the space of fifty years. What the ultimate results will be one cannot predict with certainty, but of the rapidity of change there is no doubt. Perhaps something of the incredible differences in present-day Africa, in contrast with the past, may be understood better by illustration than by statistics--as impressive as the latter may be. For example, a couple of years ago we arrived in Ouagadougou, in West Africa, at the time when a young African was being sent off to Paris to be a member of the National Assembly. He was bid farewell by all the French and African officials, given full military honors, and feted more lavishly than any Frenchman ever elected to the National Assembly. In contrast with this,

several of this young man's own relatives had only twenty years before been subjected to severe humiliation and torture for not having paid the assessed taxes required of their district--a policy which the French government is understandably anxious to have forgotten.

In Elizabethville, in the Belgian Congo, a part of what in the maps of one hundred years ago was only a black blob, one lands on an all-concrete airstrip, is received at a beautiful airport, and may put up at any one of several strictly modern hotels, can visit a lovely museum, attend any one of a number of imposing churches, or visit some thriving nightclubs. In this rapidly growing urban center there are over 100,000 Africans, representing at least twenty important different languages. It is no wonder that in the Methodist church they have had eleven different Sunday School "departments," each for a different language group and each using its own New Testament or Bible.

Another aspect of African life is well illustrated by the leader of the Mau Mau movement, Mr. Jomo Kenyatta. Mr. Kenyatta was no ordinary native nationalist enthusiast who "dreamed up" a nativistic movement because of some unrecognized frustration. He had studied anthropology in England and had had further training in sociology in Moscow. He was thoroughly acquainted with the best techniques of social dynamics, and only the overwhelming military force has crushed for the time being a very-well-worked-out plan for revolution.

In all these fascinating aspects of a continent rapidly breaking out of its "neolithic chrysalis" we must not, however, lose sight of the fundamental cultural factors: rapid urbanization, concentrated industrialization, widespread education (following European patterns), the rise of an African elite, the potent forces for nationalism in Central and West Africa, the struggle for white supremacy in areas of permanent white settlement, and the increasing self-awareness of Africans on every level. However, in and through all these factors

at work in transforming the life of Africa is one very important ingredient, language. And to understand what is happening today, we must take full note of language (and languages) as the mechanisms for social action, the symbols of prestige, and the technique for social structuring.

Fundamental Aspects of Language

Before, however, we can deal with some of the specific ways in which languages are playing an important role in contemporary Africa, we need to clarify certain fundamental aspects about African languages and their significance. In the first place, we must recognize that in all probability there is more multilingualism in Africa than in any other equivalent area in the world. It is not at all uncommon to find people who speak three and four languages. Many are able to communicate in five or six. Furthermore, Africans have an unusual capacity for learning foreign languages--a trait which has been recognized and emphasized by almost all who have come in contact with this phase of African life.

In the second place, one must reckon with four functionally distinct kinds of languages: tribal, trade, colonial, and national. Of the tribal languages, there are probably at least 800 mutually unintelligible varieties. Fortunately, in a number of areas there is an overlayer of trade languages, which are often strictly for commerce. That is to say, they do not possess many of the richer refinements of large vocabularies, subtle grammatical categories, or widespread idiomatic usages. On the other hand, a number of "trade languages" like Swahili, Hausa, Yaounde, and Bambara do possess just such qualities, for in their trade usage these are only extensions of highly organized linguistic systems--tribal languages.

National languages include Arabic in the Sudan (involving certain special problems which we shall treat below), Amharic in Ethiopia (which is meeting strong

opposition from non-Amharic tribes), and English in Liberia. (English can scarcely be regarded as a colonial language in Liberia, for it was the language of the returning slaves from the United States, who "took over" Liberia not as a colony, but as an African home, with the purpose of developing a distinctly African nation.)

Colonial languages include French, English, Portuguese, and Spanish, with some residues of German and Italian from earlier periods of colonialization.

In the third place, language must be regarded as more than simply a technique of communication, for as in all societies, it is much more than that. As is usually the case, languages in Africa are important symbols of prestige, of social status, and of religious association. Unless we recognize these essential factors right from the beginning, we will fail to appreciate the function of language in African life, either in its contemporary setting or in its future role.

It is, of course, quite impossible in an article of this type to attempt to summarize all the developments with regard to languages in Africa, especially in view of the fact that the situations are so diverse in various parts of the continent. However, we do wish to call attention to certain specific developments as being typical of what is happening in various areas, and on the basis of these suggest some of the lines of development and the possible role of language in the future. To do much more than this would require a book dedicated to the various special problems.

The Development of a Trade Language

Trade languages develop from "regular languages" by the simple process of being extended in their usage. However, they may (1) retain a major part of their original vocabulary and grammatical structure intact, or (2) be very much simplified. The spread of Swahili, Hausa, and Chiluba has taken place largely along the first

lines. The spread of "Pidgin English" in Southeast Asia and on the west coast of Africa and the development of Haitian Creole illustrate the second type of trade language. In these latter instances it was the European who tended to "speak down" to the indigenous peoples. However, in the development of Kituba, one of the four important trade languages of the Belgian Congo, the roles were reversed, but the process of simplification was similar. What evidently happened in the development of Kituba, spoken now by approximately three million people in the southwest part of Congo and in the southern portion of French Equatorial Africa, was that the Kikongo-speaking people in the lower Congo found that, in order to communicate effectively with the incoming white traders, government officials, and plantation and mine owners, they needed to employ a very much simplified form of their own language. The traditional forms of Kikongo proved to be entirely too complex for the linguistically inept whites. Undoubtedly, some similar form of simple language had been used in certain intertribal contacts before, but with the coming of the whites this very much simplified form of Kikongo was rapidly promoted, not only by the Africans, but especially by the whites, who found it ever so much easier to learn and to use.

This ultrasimple form of Kikongo, known as Kituba, Kikwango, Commercial Kikongo, and Kibulamatadi (Bulamatadi, meaning "stone-breakers," was the name given to white men in the lower Congo), was officially recognized by the Belgian colonial government as the official language of the native law courts and was employed throughout the southwestern area of the Congo in stores, mines, and factories, on plantations, and along the major arteries of communication and transportation.

There was some strong opposition to the use of Kituba, especially by missionaries who regarded it as utterly unsatisfactory for the purposes of evangelism and instruction. To an extent they were quite right, for it would not only be absurd, but quite wrong, to try to

employ such a language in communicating to Kikongo-speaking people. However, in contacts with a multiplicity of small tribes on the fringe of the Kikongo area, it is easily understandable how missionaries soon began to use the Kituba, despite its many limitations.

The Turning Point in Kituba Development

During all this time, however, Kituba was rapidly growing in vocabulary and was acquiring certain additional grammatical refinements, but still it remained essentially a second language until within the last ten to fifteen years, when it has become the only language for a considerable sector of people, who have lived all their lives in urban centers, on mining compounds, or in plantation areas. Young people have grown up to speak only Kituba, and many others, though they do know another tribal language, find that they can express themselves more adequately in Kituba than in any other. In the meantime, the government has published laws, chauffeurs' manuals, and formal notices in Kituba. It is used over the radio in broadcasts from Leopoldville, and is even employed in popular recordings of music. It has now passed the crisis stage in the development of a language, for it is a full-fledged language and is growing rapidly, not only in the size of vocabulary and idiomatic richness, but in the number of speakers.

We must not assume that Kituba will largely supplant the tribal languages, certainly not in the rural areas, nor will it ever be able to compete with French, for it has neither the long tradition nor the world usefulness, but Kituba is here to stay--at least for a good long while, and now, like every other language, will compete as a means of communication in an increasingly more complex area of African life.

Extension of a National Language

Rather than deal with the spread of English in Liberia (where the people of the hinterland are only too

anxious to learn it), or the development of Amharic (where there is a kind of stalemate in some areas, due to injudicious means of encouraging Amharic), it would seem best to mention some of the special problems related to the spread of Arabic in the Sudan, for here the various ethnolinguistic problems are exceedingly complex and the consequences particularly important for missionary work.

In the first place, it must be recognized that the artificial carving out of the Sudan as one unit might have been geographically justified, but it certainly was not ethnically valid. Almost from the start the British government recognized this fact and set about an undeclared policy to alienate the south from the north. This was not, of course, very difficult, for there have been thousands of years of animosity between the peoples of the north and of the south. Moreover, the Islamic culture of the north is entirely different from the Nilotic pagan culture of the south.

In the second place, it was only natural that, as a part of the overall policy in the southern Sudan, the British government should emphasize training the south Sudanese in English. This was not only easier for the British officials, but more in keeping with the larger policy of division and the oft-expressed hope that the south Sudan might possibly be united to Uganda rather than to the north.

There was, however, a very special difficulty encountered by missionaries working with the Nilotic languages, namely, the extremely complicated phonemic systems. Not only did such languages have a great many vowels, but different units of length, breathiness and nonbreathiness, plus extremely complex systems of tone. English-speaking missionaries and educational officials were generally opposed to the phonemic representation of the various significant features of sound, for they insisted that this would require the use of diacritical marks, and it was the almost unanimous conviction of

missionaries and British officials that Africans could not learn such diacritics. (It is not without interest that in French-and Portuguese-speaking areas of Africa education officials have no such attitudes concerning the use of diacritics and the Africans seem perfectly able to learn the French and Portuguese orthographic systems.) The results of this policy were that, despite some quite good orthographies in some of the languages in the extreme south of the Sudan, the systems of writing the Nilotic languages were highly unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the Nilotic peoples were never very enthusiastic about education, and as a result English did not spread as fast as colonial officials would have liked.

The Spread of Arabic

During all this time Arabic was of course the language of the north and as increasing numbers of people from the south went north to work they learned Arabic. Furthermore, traders from the north penetrated farther and farther south, and with Egyptian sponsorship some imposing mosques were built in the south, for example, in Malakal.

Christian missionaries strongly resisted the spread of Arabic, for they rightly saw in it the threat of the extension of Islam. However, rather than meet the issue head-on, with an emphasis upon the fact that not all Arabic-speaking people are Muslims, they tried to brace up the program of teaching in the indigenous languages, while many of the people themselves, especially after the removal of British officials, were keen to learn the Arabic and take advantage of the economic advantages involved.

On the other hand, there was a strong outward opposition to Arabic on the part of many young people of the south Sudan. They boycotted Arabic classes in school and ostensibly refused to learn Arabic. However, it is interesting to note that a number of those same persons were taking a keen interest in listening to the Arabic

radio and, for all practical purposes, were trying hard to learn the language, even though ostensibly denouncing its use.

With the collapse of the military revolt in the south and the inevitable imposition of Arabic upon the country as the basic language of education, official communication, and economic and social opportunities, missions have had to rethink their educational programs. Moreover, they have had to give consideration to the writing of the Nilotic languages with Arabic script. The irony of it all is that, whereas a few years ago most missionaries insisted that it was totally impracticable to use a few diacritics with the Roman alphabet, they will have to use a multiplicity of diacritics with the Arabic alphabet, even in the most simplified adaptation to the Nilotic languages.

One thing is certain, the future of the educational program of missions in the southern part of the Sudan is definitely tied to the necessity of working with, not against, the dynamic drive to nationalism. Here is another instance in which it is almost too late to get on the bandwagon.

The Distinctive Role of Colonial Languages

For the Africans the learning of the colonial language of the area in question has always been of prime importance, for it has been requisite for a good position, advancement within the government bureaucracy, or employment in a white-collar job, and essential for further education outside Africa. Furthermore, the knowledge of a colonial language brought great prestige. In fact, it has been one of the primary elements in the formation of a special African elite: the government clerks (in British areas), the *évolués* in French and Belgian areas, and the *assimilados* in Portuguese colonies. In each country, whether by direct government planning or by the very socio-economic structure, these special classes of African elite have grown up. They

are the ones who are promoting nationalism and taking over leadership in some of the newly freed areas (as in the Gold Coast), and who in the future will control the destinies of the various countries.

At present such groups in most areas are only second-class elite. That is to say, the European "rulers" are the first-class elite, and the Africans the second-class. However, a number of countries in Africa will inevitably be given complete freedom, or at least a high measure of self-government; and almost inevitably these second-class elite will form the first-class elite. In other words, they will change from being "number-two boy" to being "number-one boy." The European technicians may very well stay on, as they have in many instances in India, but in terms of the indigenous social structure they will form either a second-class elite or, more likely, they will be more or less completely isolated from the social structure of the nation.

There is no doubt but what the present colonial language will continue as the "national language" of the respective countries. It may be that some of the countries will attempt to establish one of the African tongues as an official national language, in much the same manner as the Philippine Islands have proclaimed Tagalog as the national language. However, this is essentially only a nationalistic fiction, for English is the de facto national language of the Philippines. On the other hand, it may very well be the case that the colonial language will continue primarily as a language of the elite. For example, this is precisely what has happened in Haiti, where the elite and some of the middle class employ French in official contacts, but the entire populace, including all levels of society, use Haitian Creole (a development from a Pidgin French) in all daily contacts. A not altogether different situation exists in Paraguay, where the official language is Spanish, but the vast majority of the people use Guarani more than Spanish. A similar situation exists in other places.

Even though some of the African leadership may advocate the promoting of indigenous languages, even in programs of universal education within the countries, there is no doubt but what the colonial languages will continue to be the mechanism by which the ruling elite will manage affairs and maintain their status. This is strikingly illustrated in Liberia, where English, in its characteristic developments within the country, is not only the instrument of government but the technique by which certain groups are excluded from the governing class. Furthermore, any contacts which such countries may have with the outside world will of necessity be by means of the colonial languages. This means that participation in the United Nations or any other such international body must be through one of the world languages--another reason for the continuance of the colonial languages.

There are some who think that there may occur in Africa what has happened in Vietnam, namely, a repudiation of French by the people. Not only is the repudiation of French more or less an official fact in Vietnam, but even those who at one time learned to speak French very fluently sometimes prefer to speak it badly so as not to be thought guilty of too close an identification with a repudiated class. However, the situation in Vietnam is quite different from what exists in Negro Africa (excluding for the time being North Africa). In the first place, there is a veritable welter of languages in all French-speaking areas of Africa, and it is very unlikely that any one group would be sufficiently strong to identify the national cause with their own language. Since, moreover, the leadership of most geographical segments is drawn from a number of different tribes, the almost inevitable result will be the retention of French in those segments. In North Africa, on the other hand, the identification of nationalism with Islam will inevitably produce the same situation as has developed in Vietnam, namely, the almost complete repudiation of French, unless by some miracle the moderates in North Africa win out.

Rebirth of Tribalism

One would think that with the spectacular strides which so many countries in Central and West Africa are making toward nationalism (the problem is no longer as to whether they will be independent, but how soon), there would be little or no concern for the tribal languages. That is to say, we would expect people to forget about their own petty allegiances in the struggle for national unity. The truth of the matter is that right in the midst of the seething rise of nationalism there is an almost unprecedented concern for local tribal recognition.

The essential reason for this rise in tribal feeling is the fact that during the process of acquiring a national outlook all people become increasingly more self-aware. The result has been that the people have recognized not only the larger unit, but have become more keenly conscious of their own roles. For example, in the French Cameroun, where the movement for independence is far advanced as compared with many other areas, the people are not content with the Presbyterian mission educational policy of training them first in Bulu (one of the trade languages) and then in French. They are demanding education in their own tribal language and in French. Whereas in earlier days a small tribe regarded the acceptance of Bulu as more or less inevitable, now many of the people have strong reactions against what seems an unnecessary impediment in their acquiring a proper education. Of course, the real desire of the people is for a French education, for this opens up to them all the material and social advantages of the rapidly developing country. However, if they have to take less, then they want something in their own language, but not a halfway measure.

Though the details of this process of making people aware of themselves are different from one area to another, nevertheless, the fundamental reaction of the people still remains. They are not only aware of the

national destiny of their people; they are also increasingly conscious of the tribal unit of which they are members. For this unit they are demanding recognition. Part of this recognition is the possession of a literature in their own language--the most important symbol of the ethnic unity of a people.

Languages in the Urban Centers

In the huge urban centers which are growing up all over Africa, it is inevitable that languages will not only influence, but be influenced. For one thing, in such multilingual regions the spread of trade languages is inevitable, for communication cannot be kept to the rigid limits of older tribal lines.

On the other hand, in such urban centers the people do tend to congregate, wherever possible, according to linguistic groupings. However, even when the people cannot settle in linguistically defined areas, they tend to form all kinds of societies, of which a common language is the most important factor determining membership. Even when most of the people speak a trade or colonial language, they still tend to form their social clubs along older tribal lines, and hence language lines. Interestingly enough, whereas in the rural areas the clan organization was the dominant factor in social grouping, in the large urban areas the identity of language is the fundamental feature.

As the people drift more and more into the urban centers, they tend to give up older tribal "markings": e.g. distinctive scarification, filing of teeth, extraction of certain teeth, designs painted on the body, and characteristic tribal ornaments. These more readily visible symbols are rapidly being supplanted by the almost sole distinction of language. In previous times language was only one of several evident symbols designating one's tribal relationship. At present, language is becoming a relatively more and more significant symbol.

What of the Future?

In view of the many diverse developments in contemporary African society, especially in Central and West Africa, can we make any valid predictions as to the shape of things to come, as far as language is concerned? We have already suggested some of these in our treatments of trade, colonial, and national languages. However, there is a very special sense in which language will be an important fact in the social structure of African societies, especially in the independent countries.

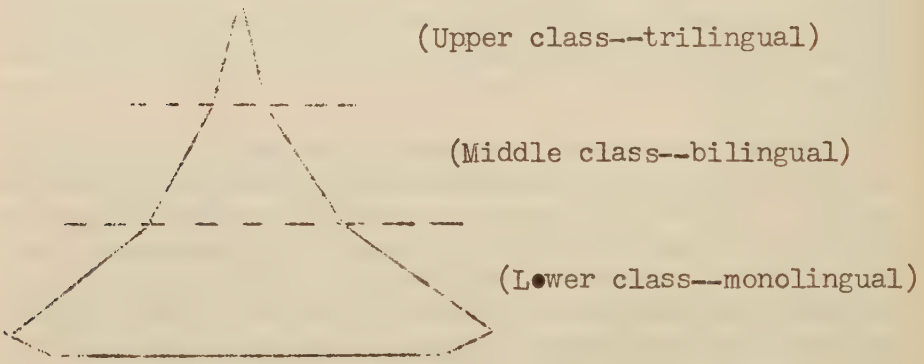
In the first place, in these independent countries the elite will in all likelihood be trilingual. That is to say, they will speak the colonial language (which in one way or another will function as the national language), at least one trade language (for they will have to carry on affairs with those who do not speak the colonial language), and in most instances a tribal language (that is to say, the language of their parents or home community).

The middle class will be predominantly bilingual. They will speak at least one trade language, usually the dominant trade language of the area, and their own tribal tongue. Of course, the more progressive of the middle class will seek to acquire the national language, and will find that its acquisition is one of the most important means as well as requisites for entrance into the elite group.

The lower class will be predominantly monolingual. These will be the villagers, living in rural areas and speaking their own tribal tongue. Almost inevitably, however, they will have to learn something of a trade language, especially if they become day laborers in the mines, factories, or on the plantations. The acquisition of certain technical skills, plus ability to communicate in the trade language, will make them eligible for the upper lower class or lower middle class, and

these persons are likely to want their children educated in the national language in order to acquire upper middle class membership, and if at all possible, a place among the elite.

We could diagram the structure of such societies as follows:



There is a real sense, of course, in which this diagrammatic representation is an oversimplification. In the first place, in a relatively short time many people in the upper class are likely to cease speaking a tribal language, unless it is important for social grouping or for "identification with the masses." Moreover, the middle class will increasingly learn more of the national language in order to share in the greater material benefits. The lower class will be compelled to learn a trade language as urbanization and industrialization increases. Accordingly, within a generation or so the upper class is likely to be predominantly speakers of the colonial language and a trade language; the middle class will vary between those who speak the colonial and the trade language and those who speak a trade language and a tribal language,[1] with the latter category becoming increasingly fewer. In the meanwhile, the lower class will be increasingly more bilingual.

We would not want to exaggerate the role of language in the emerging social structure, for there are many other factors, e.g. education, technical competence, capacity for leadership, wealth, and ability to communicate. Note, however, that these "sanctions" in the new social structure are not the old ones, e.g. clan membership, hereditary privileges, and religious prerogatives. On the other hand, it would be equally wrong to overlook the significance of language, not only as an important mechanism in the formation and maintenance of the new social structure, but as important symbols of social status.

Note

1. It is important to note, however, in speaking of trade languages we do not include only those whose structure is a highly simplified one. We mean any important tribal language which because of its commercial significance has become extended beyond the immediate tribal boundaries and is thus a significant means of fairly wide communication. To this extent it is possible that a man's own tribal language would also be a trade language.

REACH: CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURES

A purpose of this journal as stated in this issue is the study of the "function of Christianity in a cross-cultural sense." Understood in a time perspective, the implications of such a study would be largely historical. Our knowledge of the function of Christianity through time is far greater than it is across contemporary space. However, since the aims of this journal are primarily directed toward the dynamics of cultural change as related to Christianity and its bearers, the major emphases of this department will be upon problems which arise from the diffusion, introduction, growth, and decay of Christianity in contemporary societies where we are able to make firsthand field observations and to draw upon "whole cultural patterns" to assist us in the interpretation of data.

REACH comes to PA for the first time with this issue and is planned to continue as a regular department, depending upon readers' response and availability of material. Generally speaking, REACH is set up as a department dedicated to a discussion and analysis of the contemporary diffusion and contact of Christianity in a variety of cultural settings. More specifically, it will deal with the ways in which Christianity undergoes reinterpretation to fit existing ways of life, the changes produced in social organizations, political systems, moral values, economic activities, and the many other aspects of the ways of behavior of the more simple societies as these are in some way related to Christianity. It aims to investigate and interpret the interacting influences of cultural dynamics upon diffusing Christianity and vice versa. It will discuss the role of the bearers of the Christian message, "missionaries," to their intended receivers and vice versa. It will be concerned with a wide range of cultural behavior, including such aspects as language, communication, and information as related to the spread of Christianity. It seeks to keep in sight the fact that men are everywhere similar and yet exceedingly different.

REACH is admittedly not committed to the defense of a cultural status quo. It intends to present factual information and within its own limited knowledge to be critical or praising, seeking for better information which will lead to more satisfactory solutions to old problems. At the same time, it is hoped that these discussions will open up new insights as new aspects of familiar problems become apparent.

The editor of this department solicits the assistance of people everywhere who may wish to contribute their concern to the kinds of problems discussed in this section. It is particularly important that missionaries and others working in vastly diverse human areas pool their knowledge and share their insights and problems, in order that a truly effective dissemination of information can take place. The editor of REACH will plan to present a series of three articles in the next several issues. These will be taken from his own observations in Latin America and Africa and will serve to indicate the general nature of the department and a sample of the problems to be dealt with here. All are invited to contribute articles, discussion of problems, and questions for discussion by writing directly to the editor of PA or to this department: William D. Reyburn, Mission Presbytérienne Americaine, Boite Postal 8, Batouri, Cameroun Francais, West Africa.

--W.D.R.

MISSIONS, MALE AND FEMALE

William D. Reyburn

An observer may readily gather the impression the world over that the Christian church is more attended by women and more earnestly followed by females in general than by males. In Latin American society the role of the female cannot be understood apart from her identification with her parish group and her symbol identification with the Virgin. Every society presents its male and female roles in different contexts, and consequently their relatedness to a single institution such as the Christian church is thereby radically affected. Missionaries are often content to dismiss the disproportionate female-male church membership with such statements as "the men are too worldly minded." However, a closer look at such female predominances reflects other cultural and societal factors which produce these effects much more than the males' worldly outlook. The case presented here is a brief discussion of some of the factors contributing to female preponderance in the Christian churches of the south Cameroun.

First we shall state what may be said to be rather generally claimed as self-evident. Then we shall proceed with a set of factors which are specifically part of these cultures and need not be true of others. Following this, several questions will be posed for the reader's participation.

The outlook of females in most of the world probably exhibits more dependency than that of males. Her very biological make-up prepares her for being subjected to stronger fellow beings and grants her a place of less secure standing. Her more limited outside experience, foreign contacts, education perhaps tend to produce a certain naiveté which makes it easy for her to believe what she is told. Her credulous personality is tightly tied into the goings on in a limited area where she must identify herself. She may be under greater pressure to

belong to someone or something. Many other propositions could be listed which might be said to contribute to the female attachment to Christianity or any institution which appeals to some of these female qualities. These generalized conditions in themselves are post facto explanations, however, and do not tell us why a certain innovation such as Christianity was rejected in a given case. They do not help as they stand to explain why in the Cameroun it is not all ages of females that identify themselves with and seek membership in the Christian mission churches. Neither are they sufficient evidence to assist us in understanding the dynamic fashion in which a group of females begin to experiment with their traditional forms of life after the coming of the church. In order to probe into these latter problems we need a more specific look into the particular circumstances of several of the societies involved in this case.

The Woman in Cameroun Society

The most important base line for understanding the predominantly female reception of the Christian church lies in the social organization of the tribes considered here (Bulu, Yaoundé, Bafia, Meka, Gbaya, Kaka). A village consists of a number of males who represent several distinct families and who claim to have issued from a common legendary ancestor. These males all belong to the village they inhabit and they are members of their father's family, their paternal grandfather's family, and so on ascending the male line. They will select their mates from outside their paternal village group and in certain patterns of avoidance such as taking no mate from their mother's clan. Their future lives will be lived at least eventually in their father's village. They will in turn expect their sons to do likewise. They will be pre-eminently concerned for the continuation of their family male line, which is a continuum with the real and the mythological. The respect due each ascending male is reinforced by a complex of behavior, and every male's position is well ascribed by age, relatedness

and wealth. The males have a sense of belonging to the village of their fathers in which they were born.

On the other hand, the world of the female is greatly contrasted. The female is born with the sure knowledge of not belonging to her village permanently. She will be married into another village where she will raise children, all of whom will belong to her husband's family. In the case of her husband's death she will not be free to take her children and go to another marriage. She will be remarried by her husband's relatives if possible, and if not she will be exchanged for cash and kind to another village, leaving her offspring behind, to begin all over again another family which she may in turn lose through another husband's death. The discontinuity of her life is great and she is constantly faced with the fact of not belonging. She is greatly loved by her children and often by her husband, but she is forever a stranger in a foreign village.

The stability of her marriage is fixed by the dowry, which assures that she remain with her husband, for if she returns to her parents' village, her husband has the right to demand reimbursement of the dowry. However, the dowry received has usually been spent to bring into her village a wife for her younger brother, thus keeping a balance in gains and losses.

A village, then, seen from the male-female division on the level of its social organization, presents a solid front of males very much at home; a group of young females not knowing where home will be eventually, although very much related to their temporary paternal village; and finally an agglomeration of foreign females, often from numerous diverse areas, who must get acquainted, work, and live together in their newly adopted village. In a sense, the adult females are a group of immigrants finding a relative here and there in their new surroundings, but even with occasional or frequent meetings with such relatives there is no sense of permanency or of belonging.

We might be justified to conclude at this point and say that "therefore the Christian mission will find ready response from these dislocated females." While this is partly true, it is by no means an adequate accounting of the facts. How do we account for the fact that the church member females are not young brides but women who have inhabited their husbands' village for some years, or who are middle-aged, elderly, or even senile females?

The Role of the Young Bride

The answer to this question involves various considerations. The young bride's first function in the village is sexual fertility. Her worth cannot be counted until she has had children. She is not psychologically free to form "free associations" until she has provided the village with a contribution of children. She is likewise in a period of severe strain and adjustment, seeking to be accepted through traditional modes of behavior such as child bearing, planting, harvesting, fishing, cooking, and taking care of her husband's wants. The church association is more properly the property of those who have either gained sufficient status in the village to be granted the freedom of outside life or who have proved over the years that they are of little productive value anyway. Where African village life has undergone city or town transformation, or where girls have been able to pursue education, new factors have arisen which enable the younger females to make the church identification or to reject it. In some areas, such as among the Gbaya and Kaka of the eastern Cameroun, young females are conspicuously absent from church, since they perform a vital function in dance medicine which is held to be contrary to Christian practices. Consequently, a mother and older sisters may be members of the church, whereas a dancing girl's function is respected and she does not consider church membership until she is older and has ceased to be a medicine dancer. She will view both Christian church and medicine making as vital aspects of village life but will separate them

only in the role she plays in each. It is to her more like a boy on the basketball team who cannot be on the wrestling team at the same time.

The Function of Church Society

The Christian church (another formalized institution would serve the same purpose) serves as the nucleus for the formation of a grouping for the females in a village. The one thing which they all have in common is the fact that they are foreigners. The church in a sociological sense brings the females into a common bond which they feel as necessary for the satisfactory ongoing of village life. Actually the formation of the female church group serves to smooth out many of the differences and fights which take place among the village women. However, it is not primarily Christian theology that penetrates and enables them to solve their differences. This factor does display itself in certain rather unexpected ways. The real pacifying function of the woman's church affiliation is found in its own social structuring of the group. The women, like the men, arrange themselves in a hierarchy where each knows pretty well where she stands, and disputes are settled quickly by a recognition of status in the "women's company," the church organization. This is merely one indication of the African's flare for political organization and is to him (and her) an essential means for facing the world.

In the development of this process there appear to be certain characteristic steps which tend to be rather generalized in the areas concerned. First, there is more male curiosity than female. Soon the males learn that Christianity appears to favor females, since the wives of a polygamist may be admitted to membership whereas the husband may not. Soon the complexities of Christian theology and the Trinity impress the males as something for school boys to bother their heads about. (Following a brief explanation of the Trinity--the term in Kaka is Ndjambie, which also means 'spider'--an elderly village savant turned away and remarked, "Everybody knows that

Ndjambie is a spider. How could he have had a son?") Next, a school is started and the whole proposition of Christianity is relegated to the school children. The women have in the meantime found something other than Christian doctrine which appears to serve for them a genuinely felt need. This status of the women's church company and the school teaching Christian doctrine continues for a full generation. Added the impact of Westernization, a breakdown in traditional values due far more to the inroads of government and industry than to missionaries, one arrives at a period when the males begin to enter the church as members. It is not until this time or some years following this that one sees the beginning effect of Christian doctrine.

Needs Satisfied in Church Membership

During the pre-male period in the eastern Cameroun (today) the female member finds other satisfactions in her new group--the possession of a name card by catechumens, the recognition granted by a white missionary, the opportunity to display husband's status and wealth with a brightly colored print dress on Sunday, or the privilege of belonging to the select group who dress in white following the passing of the pastor's examination and baptism. For many females the church organization is a protection mechanism. Women, especially older females, seek the church, the catechist, and the white missionary as a protection from sex-seeking males. Most males view the church as antisexual and hence fear to make advances toward women who are protected by the church. In the less acculturated areas the idea prevails that a baptized woman could cause serious illness to a man who committed adultery with her. Hence, in order to protect their wives from adultery, some men are known to openly encourage their wives to seek baptism. In the more modern areas this idea breaks down entirely and adultery palavers are the main occupation of church sessions.

Comparison with Other Areas

In view of this brief account of some of the factors contributing to the female acceptance of the church in southern Cameroun, a series of questions will follow. You are invited to write your reactions to these questions and to discuss developments of a similar nature found in your own experience. A discussion of these questions will appear in a future issue. Please make your contribution to this subject by a letter to the editor of PA or to the editor of this department.

1. Could such a situation as has developed in south Cameroun been foreseeable fifty years ago?

2. How could male participation have been assured from the beginning?

3. What would you expect the total effect of Christianity to be upon patrilineal societies who encourage only female church participation?

4. Does it help matters if the missionary understands something of the dynamics of village social structure, or is the inertia of a social system determinative?

5. The Cameroun is presently characterized by political unrest and upheaval. Do you see any forewarnings for the Cameroun people in the light of this discussion?

6. Is this statement entirely true, partially true, or not at all true of your area of work? Explain.

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

The Nature of Christian Giving

[In the last issue of Practical Anthropology we started a symposium on the very practical problem of adjusting to the customs of giving in another society in relation to the living of a Christian life and delivering a Christian witness in that society. William Reyburn now carries the discussion more deeply into an analysis of the very nature of Christian giving in its application to the African scene. We hope the discussion will not stop here. Every missionary who is at all sensitive to people around him must be facing problems which are closely related, and many must have given it serious thought. We would like to hear from you.]

Before making a few comments on your situation, let me say that we have knocked ourselves out, probably since college days, trying not to believe in the absolutizing of our own petty ways of doing things. We found that it is much easier to conform to South American Indian practices and do "identification" kinds of things there than it is in Africa. The source of this difference rests precisely on the difference in the concept of the material. To put it briefly, African life is acquisitive life, while American Indian is renunciative life. This basic difference in orientation permeates every aspect of these two great peoples.

In the renunciative posture the outsider looks for a hole to slip in that he may be on the inside. It is like trying to break into a locked house. In the acquisitive society (Africa) the outsider all of a sudden wakes up to find he has been pushed inside, and he spends his time trying to find out how to keep his head outside where he can breathe. These matters of acquisition and renunciation are selective and relative and would have to be developed in lots of detail to make them valid concepts, but roughly speaking they express my feelings about the contrasts. It is much easier to

conform to the renunciative society than to the acquisitive, especially for stingy Americans and Europeans. Incidentally, you will find very marked differences among missionaries in Latin America and Africa due to these very different attitudes expressed by the two native peoples.

The Biblical Context

First and always is the meaning of the Biblical text which more often than not suggests some kind or degree of identification or attachment to local tradition. This is especially true in the Gospels, where Christ is setting up the attitudes of a new day which are violently opposed to Jewish legalism. Even here it would not take much cultural fossilization to convert these sayings of Christ into a modern moral code of laws, which would defeat the very purpose which Christ is trying so desperately to accomplish.

In the fifth chapter of Matthew, we find Christ launching a series of attacks at the basic issues underlying the necessity of the traditional law. We find there his attack on adultery, divorce, oaths, and retaliation and vengeance. In each of these he goes behind the tradition to strike at the motives of men's hearts to show them that their motives and their thoughts are really the thing which makes it necessary for them to be set under law. Hence, if they will truly be free, they must be set free by the Son. Motives which are wrong, hence necessitating rigid laws to make life tolerable, are the subject of this discourse.

Considering the broader base of this particular verse, one sees how it fits into the larger context. In 21-26, the law of murder is good enough for men but not good enough for disciples of Christ. Anger if dealt with will take care of those outbursts ending in murder. In 27-30 the Mosaic law of adultery will not stand up to the kind of straight and pure thought which Christ expects of disciples. Here is the heart of Christian

discipline. Without it there can be no discipleship with Christ. It is admittedly ascetic in certain ways. In 31-32 Christ is concerned with the gross excess of loose marriages in his day and again is stating to his disciples that this cannot be a part of the attitudes and practices of discipleship. It negates another Christian idée force, responsibility. The guarantee for a truth in the pre-Christian period of the Jews was by an oath sworn to God (36-37). If an oath were sworn to God, it was more binding than one which was not. Hence Christ saw that men's words were resting on a slippery footing and that true responsibility and interpersonal relations among disciples must not be white truth and grey truth. Christian responsibility required each man to stand individually responsible for his own acts. If responsible to God, then responsible to man; this idea got lost between the first pope and the Reformation. The consequences of it are the most important developments in modern history, to my way of thinking.

Biblical Giving

Finally, 36-42 is the matter which you raise. Retaliation and vengeance are under attack. An eye for an eye was good enough for the Old Testament, but not for disciples. In order that true discipleship should distinguish itself from the traditions of the day, Christ has asked these close followers to do more than try to come out ahead or at least even in every deal they make. Charity is born of the spirit of sacrifice and sacrifice is the essence of Christianity. Indiscriminate giving or pulling a potlatch is hardly what Christ could mean here. Christ himself did not heal everyone who came to him. Christianity in its Protestant manifestation has caught the spirit of this verse, and we see it in all kinds of charity. Catholicism obeys it when it is part of a system of control over institutions.

If we were to take the verse absolutely literally, we could invalidate all that Christ is getting at in these discourses. Suppose one of the disciples figures

that the rest are going to take this literally and so decides to ask for the loan of another's wife. Since the first man is tempted to want the other man's wife, he now finds that his temptation can be turned into the real thing because the husband is going to obey Christ and give her up. By refusing to give his wife he may calm the man's temptation and help the poor brother to work out his problem on a better footing, something which will lead toward a Christian thought (discipline, responsibility, and charitable love) rather than to the moral undoing of the man. Hence, our giving is always done with a purpose which must of necessity be built into a Christian framework. We must have clear-cut categories of Christian thought which we aim at when we give or when we receive. To do otherwise will not lead toward Christianity. But now comes the anthropological aspect of the problem.

The Meaning of Behavior

Giving is merely an act, a kind of personal transaction which stems out of some more basic and pushing kind of desire. Christian giving to missions, hospitals, and other charities of any kind may arise from any number of desires, some of which may be Christian. I am sure some of them must be. A missionary is out to make some individuals into disciples for Christ, that is, to show them by word and example what such a thing would mean when translated into the local system, culture, values, or whatever you want to call the things. The great weakness of being a missionary is that so few will ever know what it would mean when translated into the local system of things. For here it has to find its meaning or it has none.

The area where I work is the Bulu of the south Cameroun. I think it would be no exaggeration to say that the Church of this area (and it is huge) is composed of a vast majority whose only conception of being a Christian is imitating white man's religious system without reference to discipleship within the system of Bulu

culture. It seems all too evident that few of the Christians in primitive areas ever come to a position where they understand the relation of Christianity to culture. Few missionaries do; therefore it is something that is not communicated except to say "indigenous church," whatever that may mean.

Discipleship Transvaluated

The missionary cannot know what discipleship transvaluated is unless he understands something of the system into which the new disciple is built, his culture. Great sections of the Bible remain wholly useless to people who are not forced to undergo a certain cultural appropriation of its spiritual message. The institutional (church-missionary) abrogation of polygyny among the Bulu is a case in point. No Bulu was ever given any occasion to come to grips with polygyny as a moral problem because there was none. He was merely told that it was wrong, and therefore to enter into the new institution which everyone was joining (the reasons being many) he went through the perfunctory act of reducing his number of wives. There was no personal appropriation of anything.

I know that there used to be under a house near here a large press which was used exclusively to remove female neck and ankle decorations which were symbols of marriage. As soon as a woman wanted to join the church, she made the trip to this mission house and had her neck taken out of the rings. This is great Christianity and the kind of thing which proves the weakness of the church here after fifty years of this. No Bulu ever came to grips individually and existentially concerning the demands of Christ upon his life in its deepest and most spiritual (therefore moral) sense. His motives were left untouched. His thoughts went unchallenged because those who sought to communicate to him did not know his motives (and still do not). The obvious, rings on the ankles and neck, plural wives, murder, and blood revenge, were all neatly put aside for the institution.

Little discrimination was possible. A sterile kind of overt conformity was the requirement of a church member.

And in all of this conformity there was no need (and perhaps no opportunity) to come to grips with the demands of Christ. The mainsprings of cultural behavior were never considered, hence never changed very much except as inertia changes things. The rite is the important thing, and the man who performs the rite is the important man. Bidi bi Zambe (God's food) communion is the principal relation between man, God, and the church. This is not surprising, since this is the problem that was never taken care of by the clash of Christianity. A former orientation to religious matters carried over right into the new church. Priests take care of religious matters by their special knowledge. Now pastors (who are seeking an Episcopal form of church government) who have been set up as judges of offenses, take care of these ritual relations with man and God. Those puny affairs about man and his personal relation with God, his personal life, his responsibility, his individuality before God are relegated as nothing important to the masses and are swallowed up in an orientation which tends to replace man by men. The net result of this is a perfect preparation of this big Bulu church for Catholicism.

Steps to Adaptation

So what? How do I adapt to local traditions? To understand them is worth more than adapting to them. However, if you make a real concerted effort to understand them, I have found the people will usually make a lot of allowances for your ignorance. Then, the more you understand of their motivations the less rigid is the possibility of adapting. The deeper one gets into the life of a people, the easier it becomes to move around comfortably in it. This always involves the defining of one's role in the eyes of the people with whom he lives. When this is clear, a lot of the stress and strain is removed.

In attempting to demonstrate Christ in a particular culture by doing what is usually required by tradition, we run into many problems. I am sure we do not demonstrate Christ by that way. However, I make it a rule of thumb to do so in so far as I can. The purpose of conforming to some brand of tradition is more to make oneself tolerably acceptable to the people one wants to present Christ to. That we must get over onto the side of the other man and talk to him and live in terms of his understanding is obvious if he is to understand our communication. I personally find no attempt among the various groups we have lived among to understand what we are trying to do out of our cultural background. That is just more sophistication than can be asked for. The almost universal trend is to read one's own motives into the other's behavior and to interpret accordingly.

I recently had a long talk with a group of Bulu Christians on this very point. They told me how they interpreted missionary behavior, and it amounted to saying that they assumed missionaries did the way they did because they were motivated the same as Africans. The Africans interpreted their behavior out of an exclusive African or Bulu frame of reference. When I pointed out that they were not justified in doing this, the Bulu replied: "How else can we do it? We don't know their (missionary) customs." You will admit, I am sure, that you are tempted and do (if you are human) interpret the African's motives out of those which were inculcated in you as a child. This makes for the most grotesque interpretations of cross-cultural relations. It is often like two ships signaling each other with their beams directed in such a way that they miss everything except an occasional signal and lots of static. Before one can communicate Christ, one must communicate oneself. This will demand a sacrifice of many traditional ways of doing things. It will often reveal how stingy we really are.

I would seek to do two things among the Busas: 1, to understand the motives behind the gift-giving on these

visits, and 2, ask yourself what role you can fit into in an acceptable manner in Busa culture. Perhaps you should be a planteur, a raiser of cattle or horses, a merchant, a tradesman of some kind. Believe me, I do not believe in the role of missionary. It is one which just too often cannot fit. Even by the wildest imagination of the African, the role of "missionary," the man who is paid to come to Africa for three years and ride around in his car, and then go home for a year's rest, is too good to be true. Who would not be a missionary? I am sure we create a new kind of ideal man. It is anything but Christian.

Pattern of Giving

Who can give to whom? What can men of two different social levels give to each other on these visits? After you have worked out a chart of the "who gives what and how much to whom, and when and why," you will be in a position to pick your niche and get into it and there be understood.

I personally chew kola nuts when I go out and work all day in the plantations with the Bulu men. Some of my colleagues chew kola nuts when they are driving long distances to avoid going to sleep. Kola nuts contain caffeine. I do not think it could be much of a stimulant, as I have found no effects from it at all. I am sure it is not much more than a couple of cups of coffee and perhaps less than a large Coca Cola. I inquired from our medical staff here, and they said the only bad effect they know of is a slight discoloration of the teeth--shades of Ipana! The Bulu believe it makes men more productive sexually. I personally have found no sexual stimulation in it.

Giving of old clothes and tin cans could turn out to be a very sour apple indeed. I would not give an African something which was not good enough to give to a white man, unless he specifically requests it and I have a Christian purpose in mind in giving it to him. The

African, if he is not in a trade area soon will be and will find out that you gave him what the whites don't want any more, and hence you run the chance of being accused of ridicule, a serious charge among many Africans. The Christian idea of giving comes from sacrifice. Short of that there is no giving that is essentially Christian. Stewardship is probably the most difficult of Christian practices to develop in the "acquisitive" society. Indiscriminate giving on your part would not communicate the idea of stewardship, but of prestige most likely.

The Bulu seek a relation called mvo'e. This is a liberty for asking for material goods which is established between men who make a kind of gift exchange covenant. I have unwittingly been sucked into this by giving gifts. I did not know that the Bulu were taking it to mean that I sought a mvo'e relation with those I gave to. However, they interpreted it that way. Now that I am caught, I am working out ways of dealing with the Christian concepts of sacrifice and stewardship as meaningful concepts in Bulu economics. These mvo'e relations must now be used to impart some Christian ideas.

Here is, on a small scale, what I mean by the transvaluation or the interpenetration of Christian ideas into Bulu. The mvo'e relation must be put under the scrutiny of Christian thought as any economy must be converted along with the people who practice that economy. Not to do so is to compartmentalize experience. The African Christian is a past master at compartmentalizing his experiences. I do not plan personally to compete with any Bulu chiefs in wealth or gifts. The role assigned me by Bulu culture is so radically different from that of a Bulu chief that I would not think of myself in the same category at all. Since the people do not either, it would be foolish for me to try to compete with him. If I could, what would I have gained? You have also to face the translation of a verse about the poverty of Christ compared with the foxes who have only a hole to sleep in. The Bible is an embarrassing book. It

will be interpreted largely out of the stock of experiences of those who read it. Our tradition, which gives us our translation (or interpretation) problems, is our rationalism. The African likewise has his, his mythology, his wealth, and his political organization. His understanding of the Scriptures cannot possibly be separated from these things which have cast the categories of his thought. The real missionary task is to make the Scriptures understandable within the limits set by these traditional categories. To pass beyond these is to move outside the knowable and to fail to communicate. If we missionaries understand the nature of his compartmentalization, we will know the channels into which we can communicate the Scriptural message. This involves restructuring the "truth." I am of the opinion that the "truth" can come in many shapes and sizes. The distortion of the truth arises mostly because we do not operate with the proper categories to receive it in its "distorted" (restructured) form.

EDITORIAL REMARKS

Innovations in Practical Anthropology

In this issue of Practical Anthropology we start a new department, REACH: CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURES, which is specifically devoted to the study of such elements of culture dynamics as diffusion, expansion, acculturation in Christianity. It studies the out-reach of Christianity to other societies of the world. We expect some exciting stimulation to come from this department. Bill Reyburn, the editor of the department, is counting on participation from readers all over the world. We hope you will cooperate.

Another innovation in this issue is the publication of a "statement of purpose" in the magazine. The editors have worked out the statement after considerable discussion because we felt that the role of PA was not clearly enough defined either for our readers or for ourselves. We hope that potential readers who have been caused to shy away from the magazine because they are not "anthropologists" will realize what its real scope and relevance is. The statement should also be a guide to potential contributors of articles -- people who are not "anthropologists." We would appreciate reader criticism of the statement.

In this issue we have also eliminated the sub-title "For the Christian Student of Anthropology" from PA because this has for some time been inaccurate (most of our readers are missionaries, not anthropologists) and redundant with the name of the magazine. With the statement of purpose which clearly indicates the Christian focus of PA, all need for the subtitle seems removed.

--W.A.S.

BOOK REVIEWS

[Some anthropologists consider themselves only social scientists, and will have nothing to do with the implications of their study on the practical level of the relationships between groups when one group is deliberately setting about to influence another. Others think of themselves as citizens of a nation (or of the world) as well as anthropologists, and are trying to do something to, or with, or for, or about another culture. Their studies and the problems which they face are of course deeply significant for the readers of PA, which is also "action" oriented -- but in the direction of the impact of Christianity on men's cultures. Here is a review by one such "action" oriented anthropologist of a book (a very important book for us) about the activities of other such anthropologists.]

Anthropology in Administration, by Homer G. Barnett, Evanston, Ill., Row, Peterson and Co., 189 pp.

Reviewed by Sol Tax

This book describes what anthropologists did and did not do when given a full opportunity to assist the administration of native affairs in the Pacific Islands under trusteeship to the United States. The author was Staff Anthropologist from 1951 to 1953, and utilizes relatively full documentary records of meetings and reports in the central part of the book. He has added to this case study the most complete available history of the role of anthropologists in government, and an excellent discussion of the issues and problems implicit in these roles. At the end there is a summary discussion of the ethical problem of the anthropologist implementing policies which he may feel to be harmful; but since in the Pacific Trust Territories important conflicts did not appear, there is no new opportunity to resolve it.

Barnett deals mainly with anthropologists committed to helping a benevolent government to administer a

peaceful native people. The High Commissioner at the time was Senator Elbert Thomas, who is quoted as telling the U.N. Trusteeship Council that "I surely would not make a decision without consulting my anthropologist, because I realize that I have got to be understood by my people quite as much as I myself understand them." Good anthropologists, good boss, good situation. What happened?

As opposed to anthropologists-turned-administrators, in the Trust Territory the anthropologists held positions as "specialist officers on native affairs...held accountable only for their technical knowledge. Their reliability on this score, along with their abstention from policy proposals, is taken to be the measure of their success." The anthropologist in the Trust Territory acted as a "neutral" third party; and after considering alternatives Barnett is convinced that this is his best role. As far as one can infer from the book itself the anthropologists in this role were successful in maintaining good relations with both natives (from whom they could thus learn) and administrators (whom they could therefore help).

Whether the anthropologists helped make a better life for the people, which presumably was an end of the administration, is impossible to tell from this book. To tell this, one would have to look at the Trust Territories independently and then make some comparative judgment between what is and what might have been. One does not blame the author, therefore, for not making this judgment. Is it characteristic of the applied anthropologist, however, that he doesn't seem troubled by the question? He writes of the "success of the program" but he may be thinking only of the successful use of anthropologists in the program. In any case he nowhere tells what has happened to the Micronesians as a result of U.S. administration. True, this was not the purpose of this book, but is the anthropologist-turned-technician to remain so means-oriented even after he finishes the job that he cannot ask what it was all for, or expect that his colleagues may ask?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reaction from Peru

Enclosed you will find a list of 21 subscribers to Practical Anthropology and a check to cover the cost of the number of subscriptions indicated. This is the result of just a little "push" at the annual conference of the Peru branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Those of us who have been receiving PA are wholeheartedly behind it and want to see it grow as mentioned in the first 1957 issue, as well as acquaint our fellow workers with it.

We trust, also that within the coming year there will be some material sent in from Peru which will be of value to PA. Our anthropology committee was set up to encourage technical write-ups for local publication, but we are also trying to encourage our fellow members to "think through" some of their problems on paper so that they can polish them off and thus be of benefit to someone else through PA. We have in mind two or three subjects in particular we would like to see written up. These may be of interest to you. If nothing else, we trust we can stimulate some discussion through the "Practical Problems" section, as the problems always seem to be much more obvious than the solutions.

I personally have appreciated following the Reyburn articles and some of the book reviews, which help keep an old anthropology student in touch with his field. A "Christianity in Cross Cultures" section sounds good to me.

Ray Hart
Instituto Linguistico
Yarinacocha Pacallpa
Peru